



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

May 2, 2016

Good afternoon Chairwoman Jones and members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. I am Beth Tsvetkoff, the Executive Director of the Ohio Alliance of YMCAs.

The Ohio Alliance of YMCAs is a nonprofit organization that represents the 163 YMCAs throughout Ohio. We are a grassroots driven and governed organization that advocates and educates on behalf of the YMCAs and their mission.

On behalf of Ohio's YMCAs, I would like to express our support of SB 287. Helping Ohio's health agencies to gather data around diabetes and determine strategic next steps to addressing diabetes is a critical step in protecting the health of Ohioans.

The YMCA has long been an organization dedicated to improving the health of our communities. For the last ten years and with the support and commitment from our national office (YMCA of the USA), YMCAs across the country, including many in Ohio, have turned their focus to policy, systems, and environmental changes in their communities. Out of that work, YMCAs and their partners across the country helped institute over 39,000 population health strategies impacting over 73 million people. Examples include healthy corner stores, Safe Routes to School implementation, and zoning that promotes biking and walking.

As part of this commitment to improving care and lowering cost, YMCAs embraced evidence-based chronic disease prevention programs like the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program. Ohio Ys also began offering Enhance Fitness, an evidence-based wellness program for older adults, and LiveStrong for cancer survivors.

Working in the healthcare space is critical for community-based health organizations like the Y because to achieve better health outcomes, the community must be engaged. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings show us that 80% of factors impacting health outcomes are occurring outside the clinical setting.

Thus, the community is so essential in impacting health outcomes. When access to care and quality of care are impacting only 20% of health outcomes, BUT strategies in the community can influence 80% of health outcomes, we have to intentionally move into our neighborhoods to make a difference.

To do that, we must support interventions that improve health behaviors, integrate community into clinical care, and work to improve physical, social, and economic environments that so often lead to low health outcomes.

OHIO ALLIANCE OF YMCAs

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Yet, Ohio's health outcomes still woefully lag behind the majority of other states. Ohio must invest in what works to help Ohioans beat chronic diseases like diabetes. SB 287 would be a great first step to identifying Ohio's health gaps, and coordinating strategies to fill those gaps.

For example, Ohio YMCAs offer the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program (Y's DPP), which helps those at high risk adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles and reduce their chances of developing type 2 diabetes.

The Y's DPP is based on the landmark Diabetes Prevention Program funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which showed that by eating healthier, increasing physical activity, and losing a small amount of weight, a person with pre-diabetes can prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes by 58%.

In a classroom setting, a trained lifestyle coach helps program participants change their lifestyles by learning about healthy eating, physical activity, and other behavior changes over the course of 16 one-hour sessions. Topics covered include nutrition, getting started with physical activity, overcoming stress, staying motivated, and more. After the initial core sessions, participants will meet monthly for up to a year for added support to help them maintain their progress.

The YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program is exceeding its' health outcome goals years after and after, and growing nationwide. Eleven YMCA associations offer the Y's DPP in over 88 communities throughout Ohio. (Akron Area YMCA, YMCA of Central Ohio, YMCA of Greater Cleveland, YMCA of Greater Cincinnati, YMCA of Greater Dayton, YMCA and JCC of Greater Toledo, Lima Family YMCA, Ohio Valley YMCA, Putnam County YMCA, Sidney-Shelby County YMCA, and YMCA of Youngstown.)

Yet, Ohio fails to prioritize support for the Y's Diabetes Prevention Program and other successful health behavior intervention programs. To this end, we ask for your support of SB 287.

Thank for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

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